

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing and reconsideration of the subject application are respectfully requested in light of the amendments above and the comments which follow.

As correctly noted in the Office Action Summary, claims 1-8 and 10-23 were pending. By the present response, claims 3-8, 10 and 16-21 have been amended and claims 1, 2, 11-15 and 23 canceled. Thus, upon entry of the present response, claims 3-8, 10 and 16-22 remain pending and await further consideration on the merits.

Support for the foregoing amendments can be found, for example, in at least the following locations in the original disclosure: the original claims.

Entry of the foregoing is appropriate pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §1.116 for at least the following reasons. First, the amendments address the new grounds of rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, thereby reducing the number of issues present upon appeal. Second, the amendments raise no new issues that would necessitate further search and/or substantive reexamination. Third, the amendments clearly overcome the grounds of rejection.

SPECIFICATION

The specification is objected to because of the noted informalities at paragraph 3. Applicants have amended the specification to correct the typographical errors occurring at page 6 and to submit the abstract on a separate sheet. Thus, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

CLAIM OBJECTIONS

Claims 18-21 and 23 are objected to because of informalities. The presently pending claims have been amended to address the objection of claims 18-21. In addition, claim 23 has been canceled. Thus, reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §112

Claims 1-8 and 10-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph on the grounds set forth in paragraph 7 of the Official Action.

By the present response, applicants have amended claims 18-21 by removing "using". Claims 1 and 11 have been canceled. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicants note with appreciation the indication that claims 3, 6, 13 and 17-22 would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, set forth in the Official Action and to include all of the limitations of the base claims and any intervening claims, as noted in paragraph 15 of the Official Action.

Claim 17 has been amended to include features of claim 1, optionally claim 2, and claims 14 or 15. Thus, amended claim 17 distinguishes over the cited references for at least the same reasons as noted previously by the Examiner. The remaining claims have been amended to depend from allowable claim 17 and should therefore also be allowable.

CLAIM REJECTIONS

Claims 1-2, 4-5, 7-8, 10, 14-15 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,599,520 to Cowie (hereafter "*Cowie*") on the grounds set forth in paragraph 9 of the Official Action. For at least the reasons noted below, this rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 4 and 14-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Cowie* on the grounds set forth in paragraph 12 of the Official Action.

Claims 11, 12 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Cowie*, as applied to claims 1-2, 4-5, 7-8, 10, 14-15 and 23 above, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,902,569 to Oshima et al. (hereafter "*Oshima et al.*") on the grounds set forth in paragraph 13 of the Official Action.

Claims 1, 8, 10-11, 14-15 and 23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,821,027 to Landry-Coltrain et al. (hereafter "*Landry-Coltrain et al.*") on the grounds set forth in paragraph 14 of the Official Action.

Each of these claim rejections have been obviated by the amendment to the claims by which claim 17 has been amended to independent form and the remaining pending claims depend from claim 17.

CONCLUSION

From the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner feel that any issues remain, it is requested that the undersigned be contacted so that any such issues may be adequately addressed and prosecution of the instant application expedited.

Respectfully submitted,

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